

Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind

OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Project Scope

May 2005

In March 2005, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee directed the Office of Performance Evaluations to begin an evaluation of the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind (ISDB). Idaho Code authorizes ISDB to serve deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired students ages 6–21 at its residential campus located in Gooding. The State Board of Education serves as ISDB's board of trustees and provides general oversight.

As of February 2005, ISDB reported serving 80 students at the campus and over 600 hundred students in school districts through its seven regional outreach offices throughout Idaho. The Idaho Legislature appropriated ISDB \$7.88 million for fiscal year 2006; approximately the same budget as the previous year.

This evaluation will focus on the following questions:

- What are the current roles and responsibilities of ISDB? Are they consistent with state and federal laws, State Board of Education policies and procedures, and interagency agreements? How does ISDB's role compare to similar schools in other states?
- What are the enrollment characteristics and trends at ISDB's residential and outreach programs? What are the national enrollment trends?
- What residential and outreach services is ISDB providing and what are the annual costs of those services? What ISDB programming exists to prepare students for life following graduation?
- What services are other states providing for deaf and/or blind students? Do other states offer best practices or models that could benefit Idaho?
- How is ISDB addressing technologies such as cochlear implants and digital hearing aids? What are the costs and educational benefits of these technologies?
- What input can parents and school district officials offer regarding ISDB residential and outreach services?